

useful forum from which to influence other industrialized and Third World nations against SDI. Soviet delegates have told representatives of the nonaligned countries that "imperialist intrigues in space" would divert economic resources needed by the developing countries. The Soviets also have tried to gain passage of a treaty against the militarization of space and have proposed establishing an international space organization. In addition, they have engaged in political lobbying, including Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's "Star Peace" proposal made to the General Assembly in September 1985 and Premier Nikolay Ryzhkov's program for "peaceful exploitation of space" proposed in June 1986.

The USSR and Low-Intensity Conflict

The Soviet Union has long supported revolutionary leftist forces conducting insurgencies in the Third World, many of which have brought Marxist-Leninist regimes to power. In the last decade, however, Moscow has learned that the tide of socialism can ebb as well as flow. Several key Soviet clients are now fighting insurgencies against their own repressive regimes, and the Kremlin is now supporting these clients against those "counterrevolutionary" forces. Soviet advisers and surrogate combat troops are assisting beleaguered clients in Ethiopia, Angola, and Nicaragua, and 116,000 Soviet troops are battling the Mujahideen in Afghanistan. In Cambodia, the Soviets finance a Vietnamese occupation of some 150,000 men.

Third-World Strategy

As the Soviet Union emerged as a global power in the 1970s, the nation's military doctrine evolved to match a more activist foreign policy. A stronger, more adventurous Soviet Union had begun to view conflict in the Third World as an avenue for furthering Soviet interests through military assistance and intervention. That view heralded an era of extraordinary and continuing Soviet activism — the 1975 Soviet-Cuban intervention in Angola, the 1977 intervention in Ethiopia, the support for Vietnam's 1978 invasion of Cambodia, and the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan. Early optimism gave way to a less positive view, however, as a number of Moscow's clients faced significant insurgencies. Soviet ideology offered no explanation for these setbacks, and the Kremlin had trouble understanding how an emerging

socialist state could find itself subject to a popular rebellion.

At the same time, Soviet military thinkers struggled to deal with the new realities and to develop a coherent doctrine defining a possible role for the Soviet Armed Forces in countering these insurgencies. By the end of the Brezhnev era, military writers were labeling the fight against the new insurgencies "wars in defense of socialism" by nations on the "path of socialist development." While this rationale served to justify Soviet actions in support of a friendly state, the Kremlin ideologues still could not acknowledge the possible legitimacy of such opposition. Instead, they blamed it on resurgent imperialist meddling in support of counterrevolutionaries and "bandits" in former colonial states.

Soviet military leaders have been slow to adapt to the requirements of counterinsurgency campaigns. The war in Afghanistan has become a proving ground for new equipment and tactical developments. For the most part, however, these military adaptations have been ad hoc modifications to conventional doctrine and have not found their way into the mainstream of Soviet military thought. The Soviet Army has had little previous experience with fighting counterinsurgencies. The best example came shortly after the 1917 revolution, when the Bolsheviks acted to suppress a widespread uprising in Central Asia. Called *basmachi* by the Bolsheviks (from a Turkish word for bandit), the Muslim insurgents were defeated only after a long and bitter campaign under the direction of General Mikhail Frunze.

The Afghan Insurgency

Moscow clearly recognizes that the Mujahideen can only be defeated by a systematic approach comprising military action tailored to the Afghan environment in combination with coordinated social, economic, and political policies intended to undermine the insurgent cause and its popular support. One endeavor that has produced mixed results was the replacing of Babrak Karmal with Najibullah, which was accompanied by significant political infighting.

Thus far, however, most of Moscow's non-military measures have consisted of token gestures and have been largely ineffective. Several domestic reforms were announced at the beginning of Babrak Karmal's regime, and other measures were taken to give the appear-

ance of a wide base of popular support for Karmal. Land reform and agricultural improvements were proclaimed, although only sporadically implemented, and monetary incentives are widely offered to persuade individual groups to fight on the government side or at least declare neutrality. Soviet propaganda publicizes alleged insurgent atrocities against the population, while asserting that the Mujahideen are under foreign direction.

Along with these policies, Moscow has pursued a ruthless military campaign to suppress the insurgency and subjugate the population. Relocation of the populace in some regions, coupled with bombing and mining of civilian centers, has devastated many areas and reduced vital local support to the Mujahideen. Recently published reports from Amnesty International and the UN Commission on Human Rights document the widespread and systemic terror inflicted on the civilian population. Three examples are provided below:

- Some 1,000 civilians were killed by army elements during reprisal operations against 12 villages in March 1985. Women were summarily executed, children were locked up in a house and burned to death, and livestock holdings were decimated.
- Over 700 civilians were massacred during a large-scale operation against villagers in the Kunduz Province.
- Greater use is being made of booby-trapped items resembling harmonicas or pens, as well as bombs shaped like birds.

Soviet military and political pressure has increased against neighboring Pakistan, where approximately 2.5 million Afghan refugees have fled. Moscow has also made some progress in the sovietization of Afghanistan. Thousands of young Afghans have been taken to the USSR for education and indoctrination in the Soviet way of life. This policy has backfired somewhat, however, as many Afghans quickly become disillusioned with the Soviet system and with the racial prejudice they encountered in the USSR.

Deepening penetration of the Afghan economy, and increasing dependence of many urban areas on the USSR's largesse, further Soviet domination. Moscow has also achieved some success in developing a credible, and equally brutal, Afghan equivalent of the KGB, known as the KhAD.

Nonetheless, the military dimension of the



During the Soviets' removal of some forces from Afghanistan, young Afghans were assembled to witness the sham withdrawal.

counterinsurgency has received the greatest attention in Moscow's campaign against the Mujahideen. Since the December 1979 invasion, the Soviet 40th Army in Afghanistan has concentrated on five basic military counterinsurgency objectives:

- Establish control in cities and towns;
- Deny outside aid and sanctuary;
- Protect lines of communication;
- Isolate insurgents from popular support; and
- Eliminate resistance combat forces and coopt rebel leaders.

These objectives are similar to those set forth by the principal author of Soviet military doctrine, Mikhail Frunze, 60 years ago, but they have not produced the same results. Neither the Soviets nor their puppet regime in Kabul control the Afghan countryside, and the insurgents operate freely in many towns. External support and sanctuary, despite Moscow's concerted efforts to intimidate Pakistan, continue to play a key role in Mujahideen operations. Moreover, world attention remains focused on the insurgents' struggle.

The mixed success of the Soviets in attaining their basic military objectives is due largely to their inability to build the Afghan Armed Forces into an effective, independent fighting force. Other factors contributing to poor Soviet performance include insufficient available forces, difficult terrain, the nature and tactics of the opposing forces, and the Soviets' desire to minimize their losses. Another critical shortcoming has been an adherence to traditional Soviet concepts of centralized command and control, which stifle low-level initiative and reduce the small-unit flexibility necessary to

Afghanistan Withdrawal

General Secretary Gorbachev announced during his late-July 1986 televised speech from Vladivostok that he intended to withdraw a "limited number" of Soviet forces from Afghanistan. He promised that six regiments would be pulled out before year's end.

Moscow quite likely calculated that infantry units should be included for any withdrawal package to be credible, but the Soviet leadership was unwilling to degrade the military effectiveness of its forces in Afghanistan. To accommodate these contradictory goals, the Soviets brought in two infantry units from Central Asia expressly for the purpose of being able to remove them.

Half the units in the withdrawal effort were for air defense. Since the Mujahideen have no air force, the three anti-air regiments scheduled to be pulled out were of marginal value to the Soviet military effort, reflecting the shallowness in the Soviet proposal.

The tank regiment stationed in Afghanistan was also of limited military value. It was severely understrength and was not involved in much combat. Shortly after the Gorbachev speech, this unit was expanded to full strength with newly arrived tanks from the USSR. Journalists at the withdrawal ceremonies remarked how the vehicles showed few signs of wear. Brief interviews with Soviet soldiers of the units to be withdrawn further revealed that they had never seen any insurgents. The two new infantry regiments brought in from the Soviet Union were readily identifiable since the equipment contrasted markedly with that of units deployed in Afghanistan. The new units included truck-mounted infantry with towed artillery, whereas the standard equipment for motorized rifle regiments in Afghanistan includes armored personnel carriers and self-propelled artillery. Truck-mounted elements are normally associated with low-strength units from military districts within the USSR. The trucks of the new motorized rifle regiments were replaced immediately by armored personnel carriers borrowed from local Soviet units to give the regiment a more "normal" appearance for the ceremonies. The equipment was then returned to the local units after the ceremony.

The Soviets gave great fanfare to their late October 1986 removal of three anti-air, two motorized rifle, and one armored regiment from Afghanistan. Close examination of the episode, however, reveals the deception behind the action.

conduct a successful counterinsurgency. An inability to conduct many counterinsurgency operations hinders most Soviet soldiers. Regular Soviet infantry training lacks emphasis on small-unit tactics, such as patrolling and ambushes, particularly useful in such operations. Specialized training, except for elite units, is also inadequate.

The Soviet military campaign generally consists of cautious, carefully planned, tactical operations. Most of these operations lack the boldness and emphasis on momentum and speed found in their conventional doctrine. Their efforts are largely focused on securing the urban centers, lines of communication, and military installations. This task is accomplished through an extensive network of garrisons and strongpoints, linking secured cities with protected highways and supported by mobile reaction forces and artillery firebases. Convoys are provided ground escort and air cover, and they generally move only during daylight. Minefields are also widely employed to secure cities, roads, and installations.

Over the past year, the Soviets have emphasized small-unit raids and ambushes, along with increased use of artillery and air strikes. Regular ground units are conducting fewer large operations. The number of special operations forces, or SPETSNAZ, has been increased to conduct small-unit operations against the insurgents. Some of the latest equipment in the Soviet inventory is being deployed to Afghanistan not only for testing but also for improving the firepower, mobility, and survivability of Soviet forces. The Kremlin's philosophy is clearly aimed at increasing firepower rather than manpower.

Moscow is steadily tightening its pressure on Pakistan in an effort to force Islamabad to deny sanctuary to the Mujahideen and to halt the flow of outside aid to the insurgents. This pressure includes an increased number of border violations by Afghan forces as well as terrorist bombings by KhAD agents in Pakistan's western provinces. Although the incursions have generally consisted of brief air raids or artillery barrages only a short distance across the Pakistani border, both Kabul and Moscow have warned that they reserve the right to engage in hot pursuit of retreating insurgents.

Soviet military writers have focused on the lessons learned in Afghanistan solely in terms of their application to conventional doctrine. The armed forces leadership does not consider the operation there as distinctive or one that requires the development of a specialized counterinsurgency doctrine. The adjustments appear to be merely ad hoc adaptations to specific conditions in Afghanistan, without consideration of similar conflicts facing other Soviet clients in the Third World. The components

of such a counterinsurgency doctrine exist in Soviet military art, but the military has not drawn them together into a coherent form applicable to other counterinsurgencies. After 7 years of experience in Afghanistan, the ability of the Soviets to wage a counterinsurgency has improved gradually, although the application of their experience to such conflicts elsewhere has not been demonstrated.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Soviet involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa in 1986 remained at high levels, and the USSR's assistance to client states in the region continued to be firm and significant. Arms deliveries and training for military personnel from many African countries continued at 1985 levels, while support for Angola remained a Soviet priority. Involvement in Ethiopia was also significant, as Moscow encouraged Chairman Mengistu's efforts to develop a constitution and to create the first authentic Communist state in Africa. Soviet involvement in counterinsurgency efforts in Southern Africa was not as salient in 1986 as in the previous year. The Soviets may be reassessing the costs and effectiveness of their counterinsurgency support in Mozambique.

Ethiopia

Recognizing the strategic importance of the Horn of Africa, the USSR has repeatedly shown willingness to pursue its interests in the region

through substantial military assistance. Forced out of Sudan and Somalia in the 1970s, the Soviet Union found a ready client in Marxist Ethiopia. The provision of more than \$4 billion in military hardware, together with substantial Soviet logistics and advisory support, has enabled Ethiopia to develop the largest army in Sub-Saharan Africa. In turn, Addis Ababa permits Soviet military access to key ports and airfields, providing logistics and reconnaissance support for Soviet operations in the Indian Ocean. The Soviets maintain a small naval support base in the Dahlak Islands in the Red Sea — the first of its kind in East Africa.

Despite the largest Soviet military assistance program in Sub-Saharan Africa, Ethiopia has been unable to contain its primary internal threat — insurgencies in northern Eritrea and the Tigray Regions. The Marxist Eritrean People's Liberation Front and the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front have been fighting the central government since 1962 and 1975, respectively. In spite of 25 years of inconclusive conflict that has severely drained national resources, Mengistu continues to seek a military solution.

Because neither side has the capability to defeat the other decisively, the insurgents are likely to persist for the near term. The counterinsurgency effort will continue to consume the government's resources and military strength, and Ethiopia will remain almost totally reliant on Soviet military support. About

Major Soviet Equipment Delivered to the Third World 1981-1986*

	<i>Near East and South Asia</i>	<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	<i>Latin America</i>	<i>East Asia and Pacific</i>	<i>Total</i>
Tanks/Self-propelled Guns	3,720	585	500	660	5,465
Light Armor	6,975	1,050	200	660	8,885
Artillery	3,350	1,825	800	530	6,505
Major Surface Combatants	22	4	4	4	34
Minor Surface Combatants	28	18	39	37	122
Submarines	9	0	1	0	10
Missile Attack Boats	10	8	6	2	26
Supersonic Aircraft	1,060	325	110	210	1,705
Subsonic Aircraft	110	5	0	5	120
Helicopters	635	185	130	75	1,025
Other Combat Aircraft	235	70	50	90	445
Surface-to-Air Missiles	11,300	2,300	1,300	375	15,275

* Revised to reflect current information